

NBCC Judges Guidelines for OPEN PRINT Competition

(Updated: October 2016)

*For the “Open” competition, there is no specific assignment or theme for the entries. Participation is high, so open competitions are divided across two nights: one for the print categories, and one for the electronic image categories. These guidelines apply to the **print** categories.*

Current guidelines are available on the internet. Be sure to use the correct version:

- [Print & Electronic Competition with Assignment](#)
- [Open Electronic Competition](#)
- [Open Print Competition](#)

Our meeting begins at 7:30pm with Club committee announcements. The judge is introduced around 7:40pm and may take 10-15 minutes to tell us a little about his/her background, philosophy and criteria for judging images. There is a refreshment break between judging the two competition categories, and we must adjourn by 10:00pm.

Before the meeting begins, the prints are displayed on tables and you are encouraged to preview them for critique purposes.

An open print competition may draw 40-60 entries and is organized into two categories:

- Intermediate Prints
- Advanced Prints

Each competition begins with a **critique round**. The judge makes brief, constructive comments for each image, summarizing only the most important qualities (strengths and weaknesses) and any important improvements needed. For example: emotional response, artistry, and technical considerations. Judges are encouraged to be open to a wide range of photographic expression.

Many members feel this critique is the most valuable learning process in the camera club experience. NBCC particularly appreciates judges who share their photographic expertise by offering specific feedback and actionable advice for each image.

However, to finish a large number of entries on time, the comments must be fairly quick and succinct. Competition leaders will assist the judge in keeping to an appropriate pace in order to finish on time.

The critique round is followed by several **elimination rounds**. One third of the images receive awards, while two thirds are eventually eliminated. The judge rules each image “in” or “out,” and rounds continue until enough entries are eliminated. At the end of each elimination round (but never in the middle), the competition team will announce the number of images still to be eliminated.

Club members understand that selection of winners is subjective, and we appreciate judges who are consistent and decisive. Because all images have received a critique before the elimination rounds, the judge need not justify or explain any “out” decisions unless there is plenty of time and some important insight to be added.

After eliminations, the judge **finalizes selections** for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, with the remaining winners receiving Honorable Mentions. Then all winning images are displayed while the photographers' names and titles are announced. Winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd place images may make a brief comment about the making of their image so that others may learn.

Some specifics about our competitions and rules:

- Black & white images are judged together with color images.
- Manipulation (e.g., Photoshop) is neither prohibited nor required.
- Scanning is only allowed for the member's photographic print or film.
- Picture elements not of photographic origin are not permitted (other than a thin black, white or gray line surrounding the entire image). Text, lines, shapes and objects may not be added unless they have been photographed by the competitor.
- Closely similar images may not be entered by a member during a monthly competition. Thus, you should assume that any closely similar images were actually made by different members on the same field trip, workshop, etc. Members rarely coordinate what they will enter, so seeing a similar entry might be a surprise to them too.
- Please resist the natural tendency to select only one winner among a set of related images (e.g., two irises). We simply want you to pick the very best images from the group you are judging.

- For fairness during judging, audience members are not allowed to talk aloud until the winners are announced. Judging is a lonely task, but the competition team (only) will respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you for sharing your time and talent with North Bethesda Camera Club.